

In the Specification

On page 1, before line 2, please amend the first sentence to read:

--This is a division of application No. 09/805,804, filed March 13, 2001, now U.S. Patent No. 6,336,748, which is a division of application No. 09/235,691, filed on January 22, 1999, now U.S. Patent No. 6,200,039, which is a division of application No. 798,284, filed on February 7, 1997, now U.S. Patent No. 5,863,137.--

Rejection of Claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. 112, First and Second Paragraphs

The Office Action rejected claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. 112, paras. 1 and 2 because claim 37 depended from cancelled claim 1. Claim 37 has not been amended to depend from independent claim 34. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112, paras. 1 and 2 should be withdrawn.

Rejection of the Claims 34-37 in View of the Okamoto '456 Patent

The Office Action rejected claims 34-37 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as invalid over U.S. Patent No. 6,129,456 to Okamoto which issued on October 10, 2000 and which claims priority to July 31, 1998. Application has amended the specification to clarify that the present case claims priority back to February 7, 1997, based on the ultimate parent case that issued as U.S. Patent No. 5,863,137. Accordingly, the Okamoto '456 patent is not prior art to the present invention. Moreover, the '137 patent was cited as prior art in the Okamoto '456 patent. Therefore, the Okamoto '456 patent cannot be a prior art reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as it was not issued or filed "before" the present invention.

Accordingly, Application respectfully requests the rejection of claims 34-37 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) be withdrawn. If for any reason the Examiner believes that claims 34-37 are not allowable, Applicant requests the Examiner to call the undersigned at (312) 913-2131.

Date: 2-6-03

By:


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